

# LEADERSHIP: ADVOCACY



What is advocacy? According to Dr. Kim-Chi Tran, Urologist, Ontario Medical Association (OMA) delegate, and co-chair of the Green is Health OMA Medical Interest Group, advocacy is about using your voice to further a message important to yourself: in this case, sustainability issues. She states, *"It could be as small as talking to a colleague in the cafeteria about choosing plant-based meals, to emailing your hospital's administration to encourage divestment from fossil fuels, or as big as recruiting Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) at Queens' Park to help enact climate change legislation."* For many climate advocates, there is a goal to create change that will lead to a better and more hopeful future for generations to come.

Josalyn Radcliffe, Registered Nurse, PhD Candidate, and Chair of the Ontario Nurses for the Environment Interest Group says that much of her advocacy work has been bringing together knowledge regarding planetary issues and sustainability with her experiences in research and public health. She was recently involved in a climate movement in Waterloo region to secure a municipal commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2030. In this and other projects, building community engagement and education have been important components for success.

Medical student Harry Wang says, *"The first advocacy initiative I was involved in was with the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE-ON) effort to push the Ontario Medical Association to divest from fossil fuels."* He is now a Co-chair of CAPE-ON alongside Dr. Mark A. Cachia and Dr. Mili Roy.

## SUCCESSSES



- Public education initiatives and advocacy around key Ontario environmental issues (e.g., urban sprawl involving Hwy 413 and the Carruthers Creek hospital proposal)
- Clinician lecture series to offer further opportunities for education on climate change impacts
- Building an organizational-level green teams for longer, more sustainable change
- Securing funding for practical outcomes

## PRACTICAL ADVICE



- Get involved!
- Try! Just start small and see if it snowballs. People are very supportive in this sphere!
- Sign up for opportunities and be open minded enough to learn new skills!

*"For many years, I have been wanting to do my part in mitigating climate change, but found myself overwhelmed with the feeling that my individual actions would be a drop in the bucket. In joining CAPE-ON, I found myself surrounded by motivated individuals involved in advocating for systemic change. Further, framing climate change as an opportunity rather than a crisis keeps me optimistic and motivated."* -HW

## FUTURE GOALS



- Continuing to work with the hospital CEO to form an official Green Team within new hospital networks--including Stryker, material re-purposing, and maximizing different supply sources (KCT)
- Continuing to advocate for more systemic changes (HW)
- Continuing to build cross-boundary connections between advocates for health through ecologically-focused action (JR)

### Interviewees:

Josalyn Radcliffe (JR), PhD Candidate in Public Health research, Registered Nurse & Chair of the Ontario Nurses for the Environment Interest Group

Dr. Kim-Chi Tran (KCT), Urologist & Co-Chair of Green is Health, OMA Medical Interest Group

Harry Wang (HW), Medical Student, Co-chair of CAPE-ON